

this during the break. I think that is very important.

We have the opportunity to work together on legislation—I don't mean he and I, I mean Democrats and Republicans in the Senate. Earlier this week, the House voted to expand the President's stem cell research policy. Passage of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act was a victory for millions of Americans who suffer from deadly diseases and for their families. It was also a victory for bipartisanship. This bill shares the same level of bipartisanship and support here in the Senate that it did in the House.

Senators HARKIN and SPECTER, who are champions of medical research, have worked hard on this issue. Senators FEINSTEIN, HATCH, KENNEDY, and SMITH have also been leaders on this bill.

I hope when we return from recess, the distinguished majority leader will have had an opportunity to look at this and we can take some time to do this. What I do not want on this bill is to have it offered to Defense authorization or something such as that. I think it would be better if we had free-standing legislation on this. It can be done in a relatively short period of time. I certainly hope so. When we come back, we have a 4-week work period and we can work it in during that period of time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATOR AND MRS. BYRD'S 68TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, it is not often we get the time to just come to the floor to talk about friendships and about what it means to be friends in the Senate. I wish to take some time today to talk about my friend, the former majority leader, former chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and longtime friend, Senator BYRD.

It just so happens that we have spent a lot of time together. I remember so well one great trip to London when we went there for the British-American Parliamentary Conference where we had a great deal of time to talk about the past and our own personal lives.

But I have come to the floor today to ask the Senate to join me in offering

congratulations to my good friend and colleague, Senator ROBERT BYRD, and his wife Erma, who, on Sunday, will celebrate 68 years of marriage. This is an anniversary few of us will ever see, and as far as I can tell—I have checked with the Historian—no Senator has ever had the opportunity to celebrate 68 years of marriage. As a matter of fact, my oldest son Walter and his wife Debbie will celebrate 23 years of marriage on the same day, this Sunday.

Those of us in the Senate have relied greatly upon Senator BYRD's knowledge and love of history. With just a few short days remaining before their anniversary and because we will probably not be in session tomorrow, I think it is appropriate to return the favor and ask the Senate to reflect a moment on ROBERT and Erma's history together as husband and wife.

ROBERT BYRD and Erma James grew up together on the schoolyard of Mark Twain High School in West Virginia. They were high school sweethearts, although Senator BYRD has said himself he is "not sure if [Erma] knew she was my sweetheart." They were. And they were married on May 29, 1937.

Over the years, their family has grown, as Senator BYRD likes to say, "into a brood of fine people." Today, they are proud parents of two daughters and have known the joy of six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

For 68 years, Senator and Mrs. Byrd have shown us what it means to "love, comfort, honor, and keep for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health." Their story has been called "one of the great American romances."

Every year, in May, Senator BYRD comes to the floor to reflect on the meaning of Mother's Day and honor the Nation's mothers. His great speeches often mention Erma, the wonderful home she has made for him and their children, and the joy he takes in his family.

Two years ago, when Erma was sick, Senator BYRD stood up during an appropriations debate and told us he was going home. And I quote what he said at that time:

There are only two duties that will exceed my duties in the Senate, one is my duty to God and the second is to my family. I think my duty is to my wife.

Now, these moments are a great reminder to those of us who are married. We have married in this life, and we must do our best to keep the promises we made long ago.

I have had the honor to be married twice myself. One of the reasons I am here today is I remember the great comfort Senator BYRD gave to me when I lost my first wife. He has assisted me and my family in many ways. I also remember when he came to the floor and spoke of my first child in my second marriage and really extolled the concept of marriage at that time.

After 68 years, Erma and ROBERT still have the deep and abiding friendship

that began in Beckley, WV; the love of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; and the respect of all of us in the Senate. I know of no other Senator who has celebrated over 50 years of service in Congress, and as I said before, there is no other Senator who could say he celebrated 68 years of marriage. It is an overwhelming accomplishment and really a credit to both ROBERT and Erma.

Earlier this month, in his annual Mother's Day address, Senator BYRD reflected on the early days of his marriage to Erma. He said:

Nearly seven decades ago, we were the rankest of amateurs at marriage and parenthood.

This Sunday, our good friend and his wife will have proven they are now experts in both categories. My wife Catherine and I wish them the best.

Senator BYRD has often marked significant events by submitting works of poetry for the RECORD. I wish I had his capability for remembering poems and works of great art. But today, I offer a poem by the great Alaskan poet, Robert Service, and I offer it in honor of Senator and Mrs. Byrd's 68 years together. Robert Service's poem is entitled "Home and Love," and it goes like this:

Just home and love! The words are small
Four little letters unto each;
And yet you will not find in all
The wide and gracious range of speech
Two more so tenderly complete:
When angels talk in heaven above,
I'm sure they have no words more sweet
Than home and love.

Just home and love! It's hard to guess
Which of the two were best to gain;
Home without love is bitterness:
Love without home is often pain.
No! Each alone will seldom do;
Somehow they travel hand and glove:
If you win one you must have two,
Both home and love.

And if you've both, well then I'm sure
You ought to sing the whole day long:
It doesn't matter if you're poor
With these to make divine your song.
And so I praisefully repeat,
When angels talk in heaven above,
There are no words more simply sweet
Than home and love.

I ask the Senate to remember to congratulate my good friend on 68 years of marriage.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise toady to congratulate a member of our Senate family who is nearing an amazing milestone in life—68 years of marriage.

On May 29, 1937, the Valedictorian of Mark Twain High School married his sweetheart—a coal miner's daughter—in West Virginia. That valedictorian was Senator ROBERT BYRD. The coal miner's daughter was Erma Ora James. On Sunday, they will mark 68 years together.

It is an incredible achievement and a testament to their love and commitment.

Look how far they've come. They have seen their lives move from the hills of West Virginia to the highest levels of government. Senator BYRD has gone from gas station attendant to